

November 29, 2004
TO: SEAP Members
FROM: Dennis K. Von Allmen, Public Comment Committee

The "Public Comment Committee" has met by telephone on several occasions and is prepared to report back to the full panel for your review, comments, modification or approval.

The committee members realize that the work of this committee, if developed and handled appropriately, will play a vital SEAP roll for the foreseeable future.

The first objective of the committee was to define our purpose, within the parameters, which we believed that we were charged with. The following represents what we believe to be the purpose of the public comment committee.

PUBLIC COMMENT COMMITTEE

The purpose of the Missouri Special Education Advisory Panel is to provide policy guidance on special education and related services and to carry out those specific and general functions set forth by law.

The panel is charged with:

- **advising the State Education Agency (SEA) of unmet needs within the State in the education of children with disabilities;**
- **Comment publicly on any rules or regulations proposed by the State regarding the education of children with disabilities;**
- **Advise the SEA in developing evaluations and reporting on data to the US Office of Education under Section 618 of the Act;**
- **Advise the SEA in developing corrective action plans to address findings identified in Federal monitoring reports under Part B of the Act; and**
- **Advise the SEA in developing and implementing policies relating to the coordination of services for children with disabilities.**

The purpose of the Public Comment Committee is to identify available sources (including but not limited to: taxpayers, parents, teachers, school administrators, school boards), which may be available to facilitate public input. The public input received shall be disseminated to the panel, to assist the panel in carrying out its prescribed function.

To facilitate public comment the committee again concurs that public meetings should begin. At this time, a specific number of meetings per year are not being recommended. This may be addressed after a couple of initial meetings have been held and evaluated. The second objective of the committee was to identify and develop "ground rules" to be observed at public meetings, including:

- Efforts should be made to move the meetings to the various geographical areas of the state.
- SEAP members are encouraged to participate in meetings held in their geographical areas.
- A commitment from a minimum of three (3) SEAP members to attend a specific meeting is needed before the meeting is scheduled.
- Efforts should be made to hold public meeting off site from a school facility.
- Various means of public notification of meetings should be used, including but not limited to news media, school districts, regional offices, sheltered workshops and advocacy groups.
- A sign in sheet should be provided for those wishing to speak at a meeting.
- Each speaker should be limited to 3 - 5 minutes, depending upon the number of individuals wishing to speak.
- At the beginning of each meeting a statement should be read by the chairperson that fully describes the function of SEAP. The statement should stress SEAP's advisory roll.
- At each meeting the public should be advised that those wishing to may submit letters to SEAP at a later date.
- At each meeting speakers should be advised that letters to extend or revise their remarks may be submitted to SEAP at a later date.

The committee realizes that extensive planning must be undertaken for these meeting to be successful. We purpose that the earliest timetable to begin these meetings would be in the spring or early summer of 2005 and that planning for the first meeting should begin as soon as possible.